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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE DISTRIBUTES CIA MANUAL

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WASHINGTON

The CIA's Nicaraguan rebel manual, with its advice about "neutralizing" government officials, is being circulated again among rebels fighting Nicaragua's leftist regime _ thanks this time to "Soldier of Fortune" magazine.

Dale Dye, executive editor of the Colorado-based magazine, said Wednesday that a "Soldier of Fortune" representative distributed 30 copies of the Spanish-language booklet early this month to Nicaraguan rebels based in Costa Rica.

Last fall, after public disclosure of the manual and its controversial advice, the CIA ordered a recall of several thousand copies that it had printed for Honduran-based rebels belonging to the Nicaraguan Democratic Force.

Despite the controversy over the manual, Dye said he believes it is "still a valid guide for guerrilla leaders" on how to conduct military operations with an eye toward increasing popular support.

Dye said, however, two sections included in the original CIA manual _ on hiring professional criminals for "selective jobs" and arranging the death of a supporter to create a "martyr" _ were dropped in the reprint.

"We don't want to contribute to the same kind of tyranny that we think the enemy is engaged in," he said in a telephone interview.

But Dye said a section on "selective use of violence" to "neutralize" unpopular government officials was left in because "neutralize" does not necessarily mean to kill.

He added that another part _ on blackmailing Nicaraguans into carrying out rebel assignments _ was also retained because, he said, such actions are justifiable in a civil war.

"When you're trying to save your country, some of these so-called dirty tricks don't smack so dirty," he said.

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The "neutralize" language was interpreted by some as a suggestion that the rebels engage in assassinations, and thus a violation of longstanding presidential orders barring U.S. participation in such actions. The Reagan administration denied that intent.

The House Intelligence Committee concluded last month that the manual violated a 1982 law barring use of CIA funds to overthrow Nicaragua's Sandinista government and revealed inadequate CIA command and control over the covert war. But the panel said the manual showed "negligence, not intent to violate the law."

"Soldier of Fortune," a magazine that chronicles mercenary adventures and anti-communist guerrilla wars, has long backed the rebels fighting Nicaragua's government. It has sent training teams to Central America and its reporters have accompanied rebels on combat missions.

Dye said the magazine has printed a total of 500 copies of the manual, entitled "Psychological Operations in Guerrilla War," and distributed 30 copies to rebels in the Revolutionary Democratic Alliance, known by its Spanish initials ARDE, and Misura, an organization of Atlantic coast Indians.

Inside the front cover of the green-covered reprint are the words, "A present from the magazine, 'Soldier of Fortune' - Death to the tyrants!"

A CIA spokeswoman Kathy Pherson said the agency had no comment on the "Soldier of Fortune" reprints.